

ALL

SAINTS



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# Wordwise

## SOLDIER-SAINTS Matching Activity

If you check the back pages of our church calendar, you will find additional SOLDIER-SAINTS. Can you find the feast days and match them to the following SOLDIER-SAINTS?

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| St. Auxentius          | April 15    |
| Sts. Sergius & Bacchus | June 21     |
| St. Theodore           | February 14 |
| St. Sebastian          | October 26  |
| St. Julian             | October 7   |
| St. Sabbas Gothinus    | February 8  |
| St. Demetrius          | December 18 |
| St. Basiliscus         | October 19  |
| St. Varus              | May 22      |
| St. Longinus           | October 16  |

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|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| St. Auxentius - Feb. 14         | St. Julian - June 21    |
| Sts. Sergius & Bacchus - Oct. 7 | St. Sebastian - Dec. 18 |
| St. Theodore - Feb. 8           |                         |
| St. Basiliscus - May 22         |                         |
| St. Demetrius - Oct. 26         |                         |
| St. Sabbas Gothinus - Apr. 15   |                         |
| St. Varus - Oct. 19             |                         |
| St. Longinus - Oct. 16          |                         |

# SOLDIER-SAINTS



A soldier is a person who is **STRONG, COURAGEOUS, LOYAL** and **DEDICATED** to a particular purpose or undertaking. Many young people want to be like the soldier - to have a strong body, mind and personality. Even the soldier in your children's story, The Steadfast Tin Soldier, was an example of a brave personality.

Going into our church history, we find many examples of **SOLDIER-SAINTS**.

**SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL**, depicted in icons with his armor and sword, is known as the military commander of the angels. At one point in time, Lucifer, who was originally a good angel, decided he was as important as **GOD**. A fierce battle occurred. St Michael the Archangel led this battle between the angels who were loyal to God and those who followed Lucifer. His name - Michael that means "who is like God" - was the war cry during this famous event. Lucifer and his followers, now called the bad angels or devils, were thrown out of heaven forever.

Today, many military soldiers, sailors and pilots pray to St. Michael the Archangel for protection. We celebrate his Feast Day on November 8.

The first human soldier-saint was **SAINT LONGINUS**. He was the centurion at the foot of Jesus' cross who recognized Christ's divinity, saying: "Truly this was the Son of God." (Matt. 27:54) Later, because he became a Christian, Longinus was martyred.

Another soldier-saint was **SAINT GEORGE**. Coming from a military background, St. George joined the army at a young age and quickly worked his way up to an important position as a personal guard in the emperor's army.

Earlier I said a soldier is strong in body and mind. St. George displayed great spiritual strength as well. The emperor had given an order to persecute all Christian people. As a soldier, St. George was to participate in this order. Instead, he criticized the emperor and had the strength to shout out that he was a Christian! St. George was tortured, labeled a traitor and then killed.

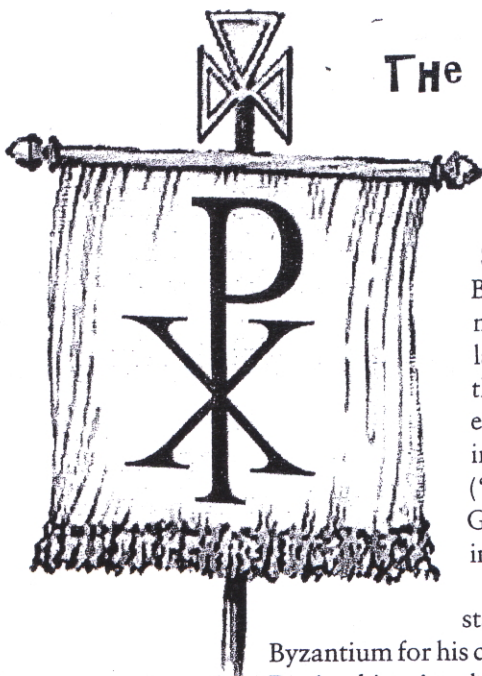
One icon shows St. George

sitting on a white horse with a lance in his hand, successfully piercing the mouth of a dragon. The dragon symbolizes the Evil One, or sin. "You fought the good fight with faith, O Martyr of Christ, George," we sing in the Troparion for his Feast Day, April 23.

**BORIS** and **GLEB** were brothers and the sons of Prince Vladimir. Their father recognized his sons' devoutness to their Christian faith and love for each other. Their Christian faith conflicted with their military orders. Sviatopolk, their stepbrother, greedy for power and land, plotted and had his stepbrothers murdered. "...You did not oppose the attacks of the enemy, your brother when he killed your bodies but could not touch your souls," we sing in Troparion 2 on their Feast Day, July 24.

**ST. CONSTANTINE's** religious experience began before a battle at the Milvian Bridge outside the city of Rome. Up to that point in his life, he was a pagan and worshipped the Sun as his god. The night before the battle, General Constantine became worried that he and his soldiers might lose. Constantine prayed to the Christian God for protection. In a dream, Jesus told him to use the sign of the cross on his soldiers' shields. They won the important battle.

When Constantine the Great



## THE BANNER OF St. CONSTANTINE the Great

St. Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge counts among the most decisive moments in world history. Constantine later made a standard, or banner, using the symbol he saw in his vision – a cross emblazoned on the face of the sun and intertwined with the Greek letters XP ("Chi-Rho," the first two letters of the Greek word for "Christ") that he used in his later battles.

The first Christian emperor, Constantine chose the ancient Greek city of Byzantium for his capital, and renamed it Constantinople. During his reign, he called together many bishops for the Council of Nicaea during which the Church Fathers defined our Profession of Faith, sometimes called The Nicene Creed in which the exact nature of the Christian religion was defined. It is known today as the 'Nicene Creed.'

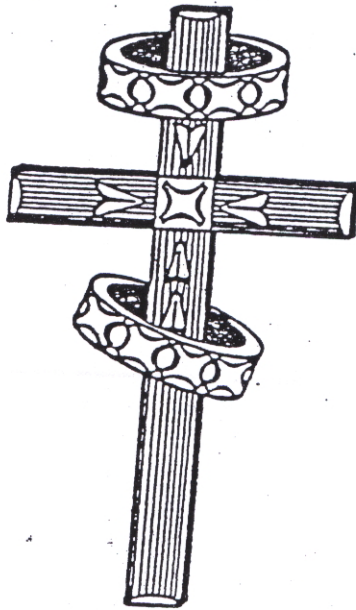
Many Christians wear a cross as their "sign." If you carried a banner into the battles of everyday life for your faith today, what might it look like?

became the Roman Emperor – the very first CHRISTIAN EMPEROR, the persecution of Christians dropped. The Christian people were given back basic freedoms, such as holding public office and especially the right to openly worship God.

These men, our SOLDIER-SAINTS, shared their HOLINESS and SPIRITUAL

STRENGTH with their fellow man at great personal risk. They did not become saints because they were good fighters but because they were good Christians. They became SOLDIERS OF CHRIST. ■





## **The Holy Mystery Of Marriage**

**Father Robert E Lucas**